The celebrated surgeon was a fellow of the Royal Society from 1710 (contributing astronomical observations from a ship in 1716 to the Proceeding), and a member of the Society of Antiquaries. He was master of the Cardigan masonic lodge at Charing Cross. On 29.XI.1689 (at St Benet Fink, City of London) he married Jane Churchill, sister of Awnsham Churchill (1638–1728), MP and bookseller. Their son William was born the following year; he became archdeacon of Gloucester. Seven more children were baptised at St Bride’s Fleet Street until 1699; Jane died in 1702. Geekie added a footnote to a letter of 20.IV.1702 to his patient John Locke “I labor under the unexpressible loss of my dearest friend and Wife”. Geekie had been treating Locke unsuccessfully for the ear infection that lead to the philosopher’s deafness.

Geekie was also a known art collector and philanthropist. In 1684 he gave a portrait of Sir Edmond Bury Godfrey (a Protestant magistrate murdered by Catholics after the Titus Oates affair) to St Martin-in-the-Fields, as well as two frames divided into four compartments containing representations of Catholic cruelties against Protestants, “neatly painted and original.”

A pastel copy of the Godfrey painting (London, NPG; v. English sch.) might be Geekie’s own work.

Geekie was master of the Barber’s Company in 1719, and donated to them a portrait of Inigo Jones (school of Van Dyck); he also seems to have owned, and copied, a portrait of the same sitter by Dobson. His will (in addition to charitable bequests etc.; proved 15.VII.1727) lists a large number of pictures by Sir Godfrey Kneller to be divided among his children. These included portraits of King William “of glorious memory”; the staunch anti-Catholic Bishop Compton (perhaps NPG 2952); and a portrait of John Locke acquired from the artist (it later belonged to Sir Robert Walpole; see Geekie’s letter to Locke of 26.II.1703). He also owned a Van Dyck, of Sir Theodore de Mayerne’s dead son, and a Breugel panel of the Blind leading the Blind.


**GEEKIE, Alexander**

Baldowrie 4.VII.1655 – London VII.1727

The same signature appears in a rather weaker copy after Kneller’s portrait of John Locke now in the Hermitage. That painting was sold by Kneller to Geekie in II.1703 and engraved while in his collection by Vertue in 1713 (Ingamells 2009, p. 153). The pastel went unremarked until 2017.

Geekie’s son John, who died in Telfficherry in 1747, bequeathed to his own son John “my father’s picture by Sr Godfrey Kneller...three crayon portraits of Erasmus Dr Needham and Mr Locke and his own picture when a boy.” It is possible that the three pastels were the group catalogued as of Erasmus, Locke and Newton in Francis Cotes’s posthumous sale (v. English school; lost); it is also plausible that they were the work of Alexander Geekie.

**Bibliography**


**GENEALOGIES Geekie**

**Pastels**

- **1.3419.101** Mr Geekie Chirurg [?Alexander GEEKIE (1635–1727), surgeon, FRS 1710, art collector; or his son, Alexander Geekie, suror p.1708], cr. clv, 28x20, 1698 (London, Sotheby’s, 24.VII.1980, Lot 86. London, Christie’s South Kensington, 1.VII.2004, Lot 12 repr., attr. Henrietta Johnson, est. £200–300, sold £500. Lit.: Ingamells 2009b, p. 98 n.r., as by Gibson [new attr.], ?


The spirit & force of art, exh. 20.VI.–6.VII.2018, no. 9) [new attr.; ?identification]

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